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**Don Casey**  
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### Question:

Don Casey: ,

don - I have a trailable Sea Ray 290 which I almost always gas up at roadside gas stations, which means 10% ethanol gas. I read and hear various opinions on the ramifications of 10% ethanol. What is your expert opinion on this issue in regard to efficiency of gas use, engine performance, offseason storage, etc. Thanks.  
Wally

Wally

### Answer:

Wally,

The biggest problem with ethanol is that if the engine or the fuel system was not designed for it, some plastic or rubber parts may be attacked by the alcohol. The resulting problems can be gasoline loose in the bilge, engine damage, air leaks in the fuel system, and recently some molded fuel tanks have shown little resistance to the alcohol. The dissolved tank material ends up in the engine.

That said, later model boats seem to handle ethanol fine. Performance-wise, I doubt that you can tell the difference with most engines between a tank of regular gas and a tank of ethanol, except that oxygenated gasoline does tend to result in a leaner mix. This could cause rough idling and higher engine temperatures. You may need to adjust or rejet your carburetor for a steady diet of ethanol.

I would not leave ethanol stored for long. The alcohol readily takes up water, which then results in the water and alcohol separating from the gasoline (and oil if this is a two-stroke mix). This is especially dangerous for a two-stroke engine because if it is fed the alcohol/water mix, it will not be lubricated. There are some claims that the alcohol also encourages faster gumming of stored gasoline. You can avoid finding out by simply not storing ethanol.

Don Casey: